

Wilt Thou Be Made Whole?

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As we repent and become converted to the Lord, we become whole, and our guilt is swept away.

During a time of joyful feasting at Jerusalem, the Savior left the multitudes to seek out those in greatest need. He found them at Bethesda, the five-porch pool by the sheep market that was renowned for attracting the afflicted.

The Gospel of John tells us that near the pool “lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

“For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had” (John 5:3–4).

The Savior’s visit is depicted in a beautiful painting by Carl Bloch titled *Christ Healing the Sick at Bethesda*. Bloch captures Jesus gently lifting a temporary canopy, revealing an “impotent man” (John 5:7) who is lying near the pool, waiting. Here the word *impotent* refers to someone who is powerless and emphasizes the mercy and grace of the Savior, who came quietly to minister to those who could not help themselves.

In the painting, the afflicted man huddles on the floor in the shadows, exhausted and demoralized after suffering his infirmity for 38 years.

As the Savior raises the edge of the cloth with one hand, He beckons with the other and asks a penetrating question: “Wilt thou be made whole?”

The man replies, “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me” (John 5:6–7).

To the man’s seemingly impossible challenge, Jesus provides a profound and unexpected answer:

“Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

“And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked” (John 5:8–9).

In another tender scene, Luke tells us that the Savior, while traveling to Jerusalem, met 10 lepers. Because of their infirmity, they “stood afar off” (Luke 17:12). They were outcasts—unclean and unwanted.

“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us,” they cried (Luke 17:13)—in other words, importuning, “Isn’t there *something* You can do for us?”

The Great Physician, full of compassion, still knew that faith must precede the miracle and therefore told them, “Go shew yourselves unto the priests” (Luke 17:14).

As they went in faith, the miracle occurred. Can you imagine the overwhelming joy with each step as they witnessed in real time their bodies being cleansed, healed, and restored right before their eyes?

“One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

“And fell down on his face at [the Master’s] feet, giving him thanks. ...

“And [Jesus] said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole” (Luke 17:15–16, 19).

In my former practice as a physician and surgeon, I focused on mending and correcting the physical. Jesus Christ heals body, mind, and spirit, and His healing begins with faith.

Do you remember when your faith and joy were full to the brim? Remember the moment you found your testimony or when God confirmed to you that you were His son or daughter and that He loved you very much—and you felt whole? If that time seems lost, it can be found again.

The Savior counsels us on how to be made whole—to be complete or become healed:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

“Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22) invites us to leave behind the old life and worldly desires and become a new creature for whom “old things are passed away [and] all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17), even with a new, faithful heart. And we are made whole again.

“Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (D&C 88:63).

As we draw near to Him, we realize that mortality is meant to be difficult and that “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11) is not a flaw in the plan of salvation. Opposition, rather, is the indispensable element of mortality and strengthens our will and refines our choices. The vicissitudes of life help us fashion an eternal relationship with God—and engrave His image upon our countenance as we yield our hearts to Him (see Alma 5:19).

“This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19) is what our Savior asked when He instituted what we call the sacrament. This ordinance with bread and water renews sacred covenants we have made with God and invites the power of the Atonement into our lives. We are healed by abandoning the habits and lifestyles that harden hearts and stiffen necks. When we lay down “the weapons of [our] rebellion” (Alma 23:7), we become “agents unto [ourselves]” (D&C 58:28), no longer blinded by the sophistry of Satan or deafened by the discordant noise of the secular world.

As we repent and become converted to the Lord, we become whole, and our guilt is swept away. We may wonder, as did Enos, “How is it done?” The Lord answers: “Because of thy faith in Christ. ... Wherefore, go to, thy

faith hath made thee whole” (Enos 1:7, 8).

Corrie ten Boom, a devout Dutch Christian woman, found such healing despite having been interned in concentration camps during World War II. She suffered greatly, but unlike her beloved sister Betsie, who perished in one of the camps, Corrie survived.

After the war she often spoke publicly of her experiences and of healing and forgiveness. On one occasion a former Nazi guard who had been part of Corrie’s own grievous confinement in Ravensbrück, Germany, approached her, rejoicing at her message of Christ’s forgiveness and love.

“How grateful I am for your message, *Fraulein*,’ he said. ‘To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!’

“His hand was thrust out to shake mine,” Corrie recalled. “And I, who had preached so often ... the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

“Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. ... Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

“I tried to smile, [and] I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

“As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

“And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world’s healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.”¹

Corrie ten Boom was made whole.

President Thomas S. Monson has said, “There is one life that sustains those who are troubled or beset with sorrow and grief—even the Lord Jesus Christ.”²

If you feel unclean, unloved, unhappy, unworthy, or unwhole, remember “all that is unfair about life can be made right through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”³ Have faith and patience in the Savior’s timing and purposes for you. “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mark 5:36).

Be assured the Savior still seeks to mend our souls and heal our hearts. He waits at the door and knocks. Let us answer by beginning again to pray, repent, forgive, and forget. Let us love God and serve our neighbor and stand in holy places with a life made clean. The impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, the leper along the journey to Jerusalem, and Corrie ten Boom were made whole. “Wilt thou be made whole?” Rise and walk. His “grace is sufficient” (2 Corinthians 12:9), and you will not walk alone.

I have come to know that God lives. I know that we are all His children and that He loves us for who we are and for who we can become. I know that He sent His Son to the world to be the atoning sacrifice for all mankind and that those who embrace His gospel and follow Him will be made whole and complete—“in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will” (D&C 88:68), by His tender mercies. This is my witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (1971), 215.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "Meeting Life's Challenges," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 71.
3. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 52.

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